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THESIS

"The Evolution of the Heroine in the Novels of Fanney Burney, Jane Austen, the Brontes, George Eliot, and Edith Wharton."

Submitted by

Zabelle Dickran Tahmizian

A. B., Radcliffe, 1925

In partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Outline

I. Introductory sketch consisting of a brief status of the heroine in the novel to Miss Burney's writings.

II. The Change of the figure of the heroine in the hands of the women novelists.

A.-Fanny Burney

1. Reference to the life and environment of the author as a shading of her conception of the leading woman character.
2. The position, activities, interest, and accomplishments of women in England in Miss Burney's day.
3. The influence of 1, and 2, in molding the characters of Evelina - heroine of the book by that name.
   Cecilia - heroine of the book by that name.
4. Most striking factors in this creation.
   a - Her helpless and compassion-inspiring position.
   b - Her perfections - mind, manners, morals.
   c - Her sensibility - refinement of feeling, romanticism, detailed dwelling upon her sentiments.
   d - Her relation toward the men of her acquaintance.
   e - Her social status.

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B - Jane Austen

1. Life and environment.

2. Women in her age.

3. Her heritage of novels and heroines.

4. Influence of 1 and 2 on her creations.

5. Her heroines

   a - Lower in social rank.

   b - Humor.

   c - Realism (not Zoloistic).

   d - New position of women.

   e - Chief qualities and qualifications in a heroine.

6. Emma - characterized.

7. Elizabeth Bennet characterized.

8. Marianne Dashwood - etc.

C. Charlotte Bronte

1. Family, life, and environment as influences on the conception of her heroines.

2. Women in her age.

3. Literary heritage.

4. Influence of 1 - 3 on her heroines.

5. Heroines.

   a - Social standing - occupations, interests, intellects, etc.

   b - Emancipation of heroine - a breadwinner yet self-respecting.

   c - Freedom from conventions.

   d - Intense inward struggle.

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7. Jane Eyre.

8. Shirley.

9. Catherines, Agnes Grey - of her sisters).

10. Progress and change of heroines thus far.

D. George Eliot.

1. Life and environment.

2. Women of her age.

3. Influence of 1 and 2 on her heroines.

4. Heroines.

a - Intellectual emancipation.

b - Philosophic and humanitarian interests.

c - Social position.

d - Relation to men of their acquaintance.

5. Mixture of both good and bad element.

6. Dorothea-

7. Romola-

8. Effie - etc.

E. Edith Wharton - the contemporary woman and writer.

Advance of the novel up to Mrs. Wharton.

1. Life and environment.

2. Women of the twentieth century.

3. Literary interests and heritage.

4. Influence of 1 - 3 on her feminine characters.

5. Heroines.

a - Position - mental, social, moral, political standpoints.

b - Problem of individual inclinations and sentiments, versus social, wordly appeal.

c - Relation to men of their acquaintance.

d - Mismated heroines.

6. Charity.

7. Sucy Lansing.

8. Lily Bart, etc.

111. Comparisons and contrasts of methods of the authors.

lV. <u>In summary</u> - development and evolution of the heroine in the hands of these women novelists.

The first and loudest note struck by Miss Burney is the femininity of her heroines-- she creates womanly woman. The change from Richardson's Pamela to Miss Burney's Evelina is perceptible, to express it gently. For although Pamela parades garbed in attire of the female sex, although she experiences conflict with the manly strength and will in her tormentors, although she enjoys the compassion and favor of her lady friends; although she is excessively-- femininely fond of letter writing and journals, there is a keen touch that is distinctly masculine in her. There are many points of resemblance between Miss Burney's and Richardson's heroines, outwardly considered, but deep within there is a difference. Evelina, though in many ways differing from the female genus of 1925-6, is nevertheless of the same species. At any rate, one is inspired in reading Evelina by the feminine point of view in the atmosphere; in the tone of the book one catches that which spells feminine. Dr. Johnson called Frances Burney a charactermonger, and Dr. Johnson did not err; therefore, Frances Burney must have been a charactermonger.

It would be profitable to examine the woman's place and point of view in the last quarter of the eighteenth century in order best to comprehend and appreciate the heroines of Miss Burney. This is the age which produced so many memorable men and women. At this time, Mrs. Siddons graced the English stage, and Garrick, Reynolds, Johnson, Burke, Walpole, Gibbon graced the English stage, art, and letters. These people flourished and adorned the English name. It was an age of literary prosperity--

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during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century men were excitedly busy. They rejoiced and announced their contentment and prosperity and greatness. But where were women? They were in the background, they were allowed to admire the men. Woman's sphere was the home, her vocation marriage, her explanation and excuse-pleasure and amusement for men. Were not the home duties sufficient for her? Could there have been anything more for her to do than marry? She had her husband to look after and amuse; children to look after and marry of happily. And teas, visits, balls would take up any of her extra time. But who ever could have conceived of an independent, self-supporting woman holding her own with men? That would have brought her too much in the limelight, and there she must not be; no respectable woman would display too great a talent. We know Sheridan[1] refused to allow his beautiful, accomplished young wife to sing in public. And we find that Mr. Briggs is giving voice to the popular sentiment when he expresses surprise and chagrin at the possibility of a young lady's connection with a bookseller,--

"'But what bill at all' cried he, with much surprise, 'can a young lady have with a bookseller? The Spectator, Tatler and Guardian, would make library sufficient for any female in the kingdom, nor do I think it like a gentlewoman to have more. Besides, if you ally yourself as I shall approve and recommend, you will, in all probability, find already collected more books than there can ever be any possible occasion for you to look into. And let me counsel you to remember, that a lady, whether so called from birth or only from fortune, should never degrade herself by being put on a level with writers, and such sort of people.'"

(1) Macaulay: Mme D'Arblay.
(1) Cecelia P. 179 Bohn's Library Edition.

And although Miss Burney may be ironical-- there would have to have been some truth in the situation before she could have been ironical. All are familiar with Lydia's indulgence in sentimental novels which calls forth the remarks of Sir Anthony and Mrs. Malaprop, the latter proving practically that she had no use for education for women:

"Mrs. Malaprop. 'Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means a daughter of mine were a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning-- neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments.--But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she would have a supercilious knowledge in accounts;-- and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry that she might know something of the contagious countries;--but above all, Sir, Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not misspell, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know;-- and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.'"[2]

(1) [illegible]

(2) First acted 1775

And indeed a little "orthodoxy" a little "geometry" "a supercilious knowledge in accounts" with a filling in and polishing up with "ingenuity and artifice" was the best share of women in education--nor was this meant for the lowest classes either, for Mrs. Malaprop herself holds not a mean place in society and social standing. This was indeed the basis of education for a young lady, and if she were enterprising she might further broaden herself by reading--but that reading at best would be at random, unguided and undetermined except by what was in her reach. We know that the reading would not be of the kind to entice the amateur reader, for in Miss Burney's own home library there was but one novel,[1] and by no means would the Burney family have been reluctant in adding books to its library unless there were a scarcity of them. Novels and Novelists were not looked upon with particular favor. These are the influences that are brought to bear upon Miss Burney's heroines, and so we find both Evelina and Cecelia professing an unusual fondness for reading, but doing very little to prove it. And indeed their declarations seem affectedness, a desire to prove their superiority to those who surround them.

This conscious superiority is noteworthy, for both of Frances Burney's heroines are constantly conscious of their advantages and perfections unshared by the rest of mankind.

(1) R. Brimley Johnson: The Women Novelists

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Cecelia knows she has more money than a girl of her age can ever have use for. She knows that God has been particularly generous in endowing her with qualities and talents. Mrs. Mirvan's saying that Angelica "seems to have rather too much consciousness of her power" applies to the heroine. And on these talents, these blessings and perfections the author dwells lovingly and lingeringly. No young woman in the same sphere has a mind at all comparable to Evelina's, nor to Cecelia's. "Her mind," says Miss Burney, was "copious for the admission, and intelligent for the arrangement of knowledge, received all new ideas with avidity." In manners and morals no one is one-half so perfect as Miss Burney's heroine. She is everything that is good, everything that is commendable and admirable, from every point of view Miss Burney's heroines are exemplary. The first woman novelist has endowed her heroines with perfection in every conceivable matter--mind, manner, morals, situation, temperament, taste, appearance, sentiments, all, all are honorable.

The class of both Evelina and Cecelia is a happy one. Miss Burney, herself placed in a position whence she could observe intimately all ranks and files of Englishmen, chooses the best for her heroines to move in. Both girls are orphans and their situations at once prejudice the reader toward them. To-day our novelists do not need to present helpless, compassion-inspiring, beautiful young orphans in order to arouse our sympathy and interest--but that is a gradual step in the evolution of the heroine. Under Miss Burney's patronage she is all that is

good--and we are grateful that those who hold the center of our novels are innately good. Not a single deed do the heroines perform which is inspired by motives that are below the highest order. On the contrary Evelina is moved by the most commendable motives. She remains with the grandmother who is perfectly obnoxious to her, through her duty as a grand-daughter--regardless of the fact that that same grandmother had long forgotten her duty to Evelina. Through a love for human beings in distress, through a kind, and sympathetic heart Evelina follows breathlessly and prevents the dejected young Scotch poet (who later turns out to be her brother) from committing suicide. Through the promptings of the same kind hearts she lends him money, and then quite characteristically asks her guardian's approbation of her act. Cecelia, too, is not without her share of goodness. The same kind, unquestioning heart is there. Through no obligation but that of one human being for another (which often proves too weak a claim) Cecelia reemburses the poor suffering, half-starved family of the carpenter. Through the same aympathetic nature she contrives to send assistance to Mr. Belfied, and to provide a change for Harriet Belfield. Under the eccentric Mr. Albany we find her acting as a Sister of Mercy and a fairy godmother to the poor. And what was it but an unresisting, kindly nature that lent her fortune of L1000 to the spendthrift guardian, Mr. Harrel. Curiously enough, though lending her fortune to the extravagant Harrels, she realizes the fact that they will soon be involved in ruin. But Miss Burney could sacrifice neither the kindness of heart nor the omniscience.

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Add to this inborn kindness, a religious fervor, (it is during her prayer that we first become acquainted with Cecelia) a trusting heart, and the goodness is complete.

But more--there is a dignity of action and speech that never once deserts the heroines of Frances Burney. Their repartees, their retorts and answers seem pre-meditated. Happy indeed the eighteen-year old girl who can keep herself non-commitant by the knowledge of correct speech! This talent also Miss Burney gives her daughters. And yet this internal, instinctive code of etiquette is accompanied by the proper touch of modesty preventing the speeches from ever becoming bold, brazen, or unseemly. The happy blush comes at the right time to prove the speaker's or the listener's modesty. The Reverend Arthur Villars--Evelina's shadowy guardian declares in a letter to Lady Howard that Evelina is both "timid and retiring" (1) and needs coaxing and care in order to come out of her shell. This same modesty dictates the following letter to Mr. Villars:

"Once, indeed, I thought there existed another,--who, when time had wintered o'er his locks, would have shone forth among his fellow creatures with the same brightness of worth which dignifies my honored Mr. Villars," and all she means is that she was beginning to love Lord Orville--something which her modesty (false, is it?) prevents her from wording in just that way. And yet that is something which no twentieth century heroine would be ashamed to confess as soon as she learned it--the difference being that the twentieth century heroine seldom realizes she is in love till the evil is done, while the eighteenth century heroine

(1) P. 131 Evelina

was continually examining her heart to discover whether her contemplated marriage would take place that June or the following September. The modesty of Evelina is such that when the man she loves pays a visit and finds her alone in the room her excessive good breeding and modesty allow her only to courtesy and bow. In the letter from which the above quotation is taken, and continually throughout the letters, it is Evelina's feeling that no one will ever take Mr. Villars' place in her heart--and without being unfair to her, it is suitable once more to recall Cordelia's answer to her father:

"Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, amd most honor you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Happily when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters
(To love my father all)."

or the equally frank confession of Desdemona:

"My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty.
To you I am bound for life and education;
My life and education both learn me
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty;
I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband;
And so much duty as my mother show'd

To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I may challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord."

I suppose Evelina and Cecelia would have considered Cordelia and Desdemona unladylike had they known them. There were more twists and turns to polite speaking in Miss Burney's day than now; consequently, we find this in a letter from Evelina to her guardian:

"Well, but, my dear Sir, I am desired to make a request to you. I hope you will not think me an encroacher; Lady Howard insists upon my writing!--yet I hardly know how to go on, a petition implies a want, (what nicety of expression!)--and have you left me one? No, indeed." This overflowing gratitude is another characteristic of the Burney heroine. We find another instance of Evelina's gratitude and filial love expressed in her greeting Mr. Villars after a long separation. She is writing to her friends, the Mirvans, describing her meeting with her guardian:

"I sprang forward; and with a pleasure that bordered on agony, I embraced his knees, I kissed his hands, I wept over them, but could not speak; while he, now raising his eyes in thankfulness toward Heaven, now bowing down his reverend head, and folding me in his arms, could scarce articulate the blessings with which his kind and benevolent heart overflowed." This unrestrained emotional attitude, this sensibility is one of the predominant distinctions of the Burney heroine. Continually brooding over her feelings and examining her heart and the response kindled therein by some young dandy or his actions, the heroine finds

ample occupation. Indeed the modern psychologist will find much material of scientific value in the studied particulars of the emotional states of the heroine. And how quickly these emotions are capable of changing! A kind glance, a look of concern, a polite word will throw the young girl into raptures of the seventh heaven, and lo! a preoccupied air, and absent-minded coldness, a look of grievance, of chagrin will plunge her again into the purgatory of despair and remorse at her unknown sins. Thus through volume after volume fluctuate the romances of Frances Burney's heroines. At one of the public excursions tea-making for the group fell to the lot of Cecelia. As one of the men rises he overturns the table and the boiling water overflows, and--

"Young Delvile, who saw the impending evil, from an impetuous impulse to prevent her suffering by it, hastily drew her back, and bending down before her, secured her preservation by receiving himself the mischief with which she was threatened." But he "was at first insensible of his situation from an apprehension that Cecelia had not wholly escaped: and his inquiries were so eager and so anxious, made with a look of such solicitude, and a voice of such alarm, that, equally astonished and gratified, she secretly blessed the accident which had given birth to his uneasiness, however she grieved for its consequences to himself." Such are her feelings! for previous to this occasion she felt herself neglected by young Delvile. "The late accident," however, is said to have "afforded much new and interesting matter for reflection" to the young lady. She weighs the incident over and over in her leisure time, "is pained, pleased, and disturbed" at

his share, and decides that "his eagerness, his anxiety, his insensibility to himself, were more than good breeding could claim, and seemed to spring from a motive less artificial."

"She now, therefore, believed that her partiality was returned; and this belief had power to shake all her resolves, and enfeeble all her objections. The arrogance of Mr. Delvile lessened in her reflections....." So each little action is reflected in her mind again and again and assumes definite importance, and with the new incidents she moves from despair and a resolve of Spartan stoicism into inconceivable raptures. And it is natural, for unfortunately the young ladies had no occupation to absorb their thoughts and their time.

Another form of the sensibility was the readiness and ease with which the young ladies could faint and weep. Very little and very great afflictions alike worked in the same way upon them. The meeting between Cecelia and her friend Mrs. Harrel is described by the author: "Their meeting was affectionate; the sensibility of Cecelia's heart flowed from her heart." On meeting the unknown grandmother Mme. Duval, Evelina breaks into confusion and tears, when much would have been averted had she kept cool as a modern heroine would do. Stranger still is the ball room scene where she breaks into tears in her effort not to dance with the bold young stranger who accosts her. And as for her tardy presentation to her father, she simply falls lifeless at his feet. These are evidences of sensibility, these display uncontrolled emotions.

Mrs. Wharton dares to present to us a heroine who is on the borderline of the ripe and advanced age (for a heroine) of thirty. But not so with Miss Burney--her heroines are in the

first bloom of youth-seventeen, eighteen are the ages she wants for them. And this is explained when we consider that since marriage was the goal of women, the sooner they were settled the better; hence girls began to think of husbands and marriage at a very early age--beginning with fifteen and sixteen. Therefore an author wanted her heroines to be at an interesting, romantic age. So we find very young heroines.

Throughout the history of the novel the mutual attraction of men and women has been material for novelists. Few, indeed, disdain the use of love between man and woman. The relation of man and woman in Fanny Burney's novels is tinctured, no doubt, by the popular conception and current literature. The reader is given to understand from the beginning that Lord Orville is as much meant for Evelina as young Mortimer Delvile is meant for Cecelia--and very much so. Still the temptation to bring in other young men and somewhat complicate the situation is too great for Miss Burney to resist. So, we have Sir Willoughby introduced. He is meant to draw our scorn and displeasure, but I must confess that he is at times highly amusing, diverting, and refreshing. Evelina is the younger self of Miss Burney, we are told, as the "male heroes are puppets rectified by personal recollections." (1) Lord Orville takes the clue for his behavior from Sir Charles Grandison. But more than Lord Orville is derived from external sources. Literature delighted during this period in "unfortunate heroines, heartless parents, private marriages, burnt ceritificates, etc., etc." (2) We know how much Richardson delighted in these situations, and Mr. Dobson recounts the Excursion of a Mrs. Frances

(1) Macaulay-Mme D'Arblay

(2) Austin Dobson: Fanny Burney (English Men of Letters Series).

Brooke which took place only a few months before the publication of Evelina. She is described as "a young lady of family, fortune, with a mind sensible and improved but totally ignorant of the world" who comes "out from the country steering without pilot or compass, through the rocks and shelves of a London life" and is led astray by a heartless young nobleman. Miss Burney mentions in her Early Diary reading Abbé Prevost which undoubtedly influenced her somewhat in the depiction of the later Sir Willoughby. "Clement flung himself at my feet to prevent my going" sounds extravagant when we consider that this actually takes place in a public amusement place; but evidently Miss Burney is not in the least abashed by it, for a little later we find that the elderly sedate Mr. Du Bois, Mme Duval's inseparable and inexplicable companion, flings himself full length before Evelina and catches her hand just as the door opens and Mme. Duval enters. Imagine Lily Bart of Edith Wharton with a youth flinging himself before her in the terminal station! The act seems less ridiculous or less extraordinary when we consider the Early Diary in which Frances Burney describes the young Mr. Twiss as he "flung himself prostrate before me." But the list is not limited to Orville, Willoughby, and du Bois; the young Mr. Macartney, Mr. Smith, the insufferable cousin, all, all lose their peace of mind over the beautiful Miss Anville. They "cluster about her like flies about a honey-pot." And their ways of address are as varied and insolent as the men themselves--all but Lord Orville, who himself is coldly perfect, and seems to govern and protect simultaneously, the helpless young girl by a mere glance of the eye. With a strange alacrity she shows her readiness to acquiesce in his lordship's

desires, and to conform her acts and faithfully abide by his approbation. This changes a little later to a decision to shun and avoid him on her guardian's advice, and "I was grave and distant, I scarce looked at him when he spoke,or answered him when he was silent but his (Orville's) coldness though my own change of behavior occasions it, is distasteful to me," she complains. The gist of the matter is that although many young heroes may fall in love with the heroine (and the more the merrier) she must not lose her heart until he--the right one--asks her hand--nor yet then until the guardian gives his approval. After that event we may look back over the past events and agitations and reconstruct the whole matter in the light that the heroine and her chosen mate have been in unquenchable love for many, many books and volumes. Then in the kindness of her heart she forgives the young man for his past neglect.

In Cecelia of course there is a reason for the hesitation of the young man's declaration of love, and for his illness and for Cecelia's drooping interests. Needless to say the "name-clause" in the will of Cecelia's uncle which prevents Delvile from asking Cecelia's hand is the cause of the illness which makes him waste away. Miss Burney inserts the "name-clause" because so very many unhappy situations were occasioned in real life, she observes, that something must be done. Then follows the unexpected arrival of Mortimer Delvile. He overhears Cecelia's warm declaration of her partiality to Delvile for the benefit of the dog, and before she knows it she has promised to wed Delvile secretly. The plans are carried out, all goes well, until at the crucial moment in the marriage ceremony an unexpected interruption comes. The analogy between the interrupted marriage and that of Jane Eyre is striking, yet how differently the two heroines react!

Cecelia has little more than regret to feel. The last lingering touches on Cecelia are during her illness. It seems as though the ravings of the King while Miss Burney was Queen Charlotte's dressing woman supply the experience for this episode. How cruel that she was persuaded to give an unnatural happy ending and recall her heroine almost from the verge of death!

The sameness, the unity of Evelina's and Cecelia's characters are noteworthy. Miss Burney creates a stock heroine, and in every detail they are alike. What one feels, the other will eventually do. There is no variety of temperament, no variety of experience or situation. Madame D'Arblay has created one heroine which she must serve to us again and again.

11

Annie Rain Ellis says the influence of Fanny Burney is felt in Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen - more by what they avoid than by what they copy. It is true; in the difference comes Jane Austen's greatness. Sensibility, which is the keynote of the Burney heroine - unless, of course, where present for burlesque, is absent in Miss Austen's heroines. And judging from Marianne Dashwood we are inexpressibly grateful that Miss Austen did not consider the heroine of sensibility her genre. Twice Miss Austen attempts the heroine of sensibility - in caricature and burlesque. The result of the first-Sense and Sensibility-is the least enjoyable of her novels, and in the other the heroine soon absorbs so much of Miss Austen's interest that she reforms her into a normal, lovable heroine. While in Bath, Catherine Morland makes the acquaintance of Isabella Thorpe, under whose care blooms and blossoms the sensibility, and we have the oft-quoted passage: "'But my dearest Catherine what have you been doing with yourself all this morning? Have you gone on with Udolpho?'

'Yes, I have been reading it ever since I woke; and I am got to the black veil.'

'Are you indeed? How delightful! Oh! I would not tell you what is behind the black veil for the world! Are not you wild to know?'

'Oh! yes, quite; what can it be? - But do not tell me - I would not be told on any account. I know it must be a skeleton, I am sure it is Laurentina's skeleton. Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it, I

assure you; if it had not been to meet you, I would not have come away from it for all the world!'

'Dear creature! How much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished Udolpho, we will read the Italian together ; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more the same kind for you.'

'Have you indeed! How glad I am! What are they all?'

'I will read their names directly, here they are, in my pocket-book. Castle of Wolfenback, Clermont, Mysterious Morning, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries. Those will last us some time.'

'Yes, pretty well; But are they all horrid? Are you sure they are all horrid?'"

But this vein happily does not last throughout Northanger Abbey. One of the most refreshing things about the Miss Austen's heroines is their diversity and variety. No two are exactly alike in the sense that Evelina and Cecelia are alike. Living and writing so close to Fanny Burney, Jane Austen has yet divined that the heroine need not be a stamp character to fit every occasion. And yet, in spite of the differences, there is a mass of details in which her heroines resemble each other. Let us examine this foundation, this starting point which each of her characters is equipped with.

Miss Burney's legacy of good women came into hands that were worthy of carrying on the standard. With the exception of Lady Susan all Miss Austen's heroines are good. A bad, unprincipl-

ed woman is without the pale of Jane Austen's countenance. She rarely introduces or mentions a woman - let alone a heroine - who is not endowed with moral graciousness and goodness. "The religious principles are taken for granted as foundation of moral conduct" in Miss Austen's characters says, William Dean Howells. This natural goodness of the heroines is the undisputed heritage the Austen heroines have received, and at no time is the inheritance held lightly. Cecelia's earlyrising is held out to us by Miss Burney as a high merit. Miss Austen seems just as insistent upon the sisterly love and solicitude, and confidence as a worthy attraction in her heroines. She pairs off Marianne and Elinor Dashwood in sisterly affection, Elizabeth and Jane Bennet, Fanny and William Price, Eleanor and Henry Tilney. Only Emma Woodhouse and Anne Elliot are without a very deep and affectionate sister or brother, and of these Anne is even less fortunate. That this is a very natural result of Miss Austen's domestic relations there can be no doubt. She had an unusually strong love for her sister Cassandra - three years her senior, as fervent an affection for her brothers, and for that favored niece, Fanny Knight. As a child her attachment to her sister Cassandra was so strong that their mother is quoted as having said "If Cassandra were to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate." Later, much later, the nephews and nieces whom she loved and who loved her as deeply became her most loving and enthusiastic biographers and commentators. And this refreshing, soothing sisterly love is present regardless of the social rank and position of the characters. There is, however, very little variety in the height to which the social rank rises as depicted by Miss Austen. Critics have rejoiced that Miss

Austen had the wisdom and determination to adhere to the social rank with which she was familiar - the county gentry. It has been said that Miss Austen never portrays a character above the rank of a baronet. The life of the heroine of this rank will be largely a quiet, uneventful life filled by endless domestic cares, a little sewings, visits, gossips, and flirtations - of which the heroine is usually the unapproving looker-on.

Miss Austen sat writing her novels in the family sitting room with a bit of dainty sewing ready hard by to cover her sheets of writing at the entrance of any visitors. Just so, all her heroines are skilled needlewomen with a bit of sewing, a bit of lace making in their hands at whatever hour of the day we may meet them - even the languid, lifeless Lady Bertram did strain herself enough to sew. Just so Jane Austen was sensitive about her writing, and so we find that she is wary not to give her heroines too solid, too thorough an education. And the same conditions and opinions survive which made education a delicate thing for women in Miss Burney' writings.

When Fanny Prices comes to Mansfield Park her cousins find that she can read, work, and write only. They, with their superior advantages, had learned some geography, drawing, a little music. For the first two or three weeks after Fanny's arrival the"cousins were continually bringing some fresh report of her ignorance into the drawing-room.

'Dear mama, only think my cousin cannot put the map of Europe together,' or'my cousin cannot tell the principal rivers

of Russia' - or 'she has never heard of Asia Minor' - or 'she does not know the difference between water colors and crayons! How strange! Did you ever hear of anything so stupid?'" The education of Fanny was entrusted to the governess who had charge of her cousins' training.

The realism which Jane Austen brings to bear upon the daily lives is interesting if only for the skill which prevents these accounts of uneventful lives from becoming monotonous and dreary. Perhaps the touch of humor and irony with which she endows her heroines is one of the reasons. Who but Miss Austen could and would give a humorous turn to Lady Catherine De Bourgh's and Elizabeth's encounter?

"'Upon my word,' said her Ladyship, 'you give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person. Pray, what is your age?'

'With three younger sisters grown up,' replied Elizabeth, smiling, 'your ladyship can hardly expect me to own it.'"

In her second encounter with Lady Catherine Elizabeth was again victorious, due, no doubt, to her wit.

"'A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that you, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I knew it must be a scandalous falsehood, though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.'

'If you believed it impossible to be true,' said Elizabeth, coloring with astonishment and disdain, 'I wonder you took the

trouble of coming so far. What could your ladyship propose by it?'

'This is not to be bourne. Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew made you an offer of marriage?'

'Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible.'

'It must be so while he retains the use of his reason. But your allurements may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him forget what he owes to himself and his family. You may have drawn him in.'

'If I have I shall be the last person to confess it.'

'Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this.....This match, to which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place.....Because honor, decorum, precedence nay, interest forbid it. Yes, Miss Bennet, interest, for do not expect to be noticed by his family or friends.....Your Alliance will be a disgrace; your name will never even be mentioned by any one of us... Let us sit down. You are to understand, Miss Bennet; that I came here with the determined resolution of carrying my purpose.....I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment.'

'That will make your ladyship's situation at present more pitiable; but will have no effect on me.'

'I will not be interrupted!.....If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up.'

'In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting my sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal.'"

In spite of the repartee Elizabeth deals in - which is surprisingly, amazingly modern in spirit - she, as well as the rest of Miss Austen's Heroines, are well bred. Particularly noticeable is Elizabeth's breeding in contrast to that of her mother and of her sister Lydia. So too, placed in a situation where intercourse with Miss Lucy and Miss Steele is inevitable, and the delightfully vulgar Mrs. Jennings, the breeding of Elinor Dashwood is emphasized.

Although Jane Austen does not consistently adhere to the innocent age of seventeen and eighteen for her heroines, yet these children of hers are delightfully young and artless.

In the very important question of love and marriage and lovers, we find that Jane Austen's heroines are more likely to grow up in their love for their future lovers rather than to fall suddenly into love at first sight as though falling down an unexpected staircase. Emma has long been in love with Mr. Knightly before she recognizes her feelings. Fanny Price has been nursing her love for Edmund since childhood. Anne Elliot's love has been in the past, and for eight and one half years she has fed its fire while vainly trying to supress it. Admirable is the faithfulness of these young women to the men they love. Their confidence and trust in them is unbounded - not without ground of course, for Miss Austen's heroines do not really love unworthy men. They look up to their chosen men as though they were each a Delphic Oracle.

And the men even though unavowed lovers like Mr. Knightly; or angered lovers resisting the love like Captain Wentworth; or unconsciously lovers like Edmund Bertram; are the protectors, the guardians, and advisors of these pure young women. And yet, Charlotte Bronte was right when she said that "the passions were perfectly unknown to Jane Austen." A soothing, unagitated feeling is derived from the loves of Miss Austen's heroines quite in contrast with the ravaging loves of the Brontes. So much for the likenesses.

Now for the differences in the heroines. Emma Woodhouse is a delightful little heroine because she is so life-like. How many of us and our friends confidently plan a course of action magnanimously and then find that our confidences and plan of action were based on an entirely wrong theory, and how ashamed we are of ourselves! So Emma, important in her own home, important in her community, begins a campaign of patronage and matrimony. How many mistakes she makes, how often she miscalculates and makes herself ridiculous. And yet in spite of her silly blunders, partly for her devotion to her father, partly for her cleverness, partly for her firm foundation, we cannot help liking her.

Contrasted with Emma's confidence is Fanny Price's subtle and delicate feeling for her situation in her uncle's house. Her gratitude to her uncle, her confidence in Edmund, and her weakness endear her to us. How analgous her first entrance at Mansfield is to Jane Eyre's first entrance in her uncle's home. Mrs. Norris would be the counterpart of Jane's Aunt.

In spite of her initial timidity Fanny has silently, unobtrusively been gaining in a certain kind of power, the power that comes from the knowledge of right living and Christian living. And we find when disaster comes to the Bertram family that although easily agitated and upset herself, she has that strength and power and confidence inspiring quality in others. "Now, I shall be happy," cries that impassive Lady Bertram when Fanny comes to her during her daughters' disgraces and sons illness. Her own family in Portsmouth were the better for Fanny's visit with them - particularly her sister Susan. But besides these, even the more fashionable Miss Crawford was hanging on Fanny's approbation, for she knew, she had the cleverness to know, that the road to Edmund's heart lay through Fanny. During the theatrical rehearsals we find every one dependent for some kind of help upon Fanny - and she always gives it. But the greatest test of her goodness is found where least expected. So long as Henry Crawford is with Fanny he becomes a different man. He is well on his road to reform. He is there! - and had not Sir Thomas's mistaken kindness separated Fanny from Mansfield Park Crawford would have remained good. Under Fanny's sunny influence one could not help being honest - her presence dispelled weakness of all kinds. Fanny-eighteen years old, was ignorant of the world, shrinking and docile to an appealing, almost pathetic degree. But her mind was twenty years older (1). Yet how well did this timid, shrinking woman guard her secret love!

(1) O. W. Firkins: Jane Austen

Anne Elliot, too, was a quiet little soul; but of a very different nature from that of her sister heroine. Considered absolutely insignificant at home, disappointed in love eight years before the story begins, she has been devoting herself to usefulness and kindness wherever needed. She is a kind of social worker with little of the professional's knowledge, but an excess of feeling and sympathy for the poor of her village, for the suffering, even where she goes for rest and change. We find Anne attending the sick little nephew; the impoverished former friend, Mrs. Smith; giving good and efficient advice when the accident comes to Louisa.

Anne is twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, beyond the first bloom of beauty, but she still retains a quiet dignity of beauty that attracts people. Anne Elliot is "the charm and nucleus of the story." "She is almost too good for me," wrote Miss Austen to one of her nieces who wanted to know about the heroine. She has a strong mind coupled with a sweetness of temper. It is she who succeeds above all the others in consoling Captain Benwick over his loss. And in this she is aided by her reading and knowledge of literature. She divines - as she does so often, what is in the mind of his sister and Captain Wentworth - what it is that will draw him from his shell.

But the charm of Anne lies in her love. "She is really in love, and the love is more powerful than Anne herself." (1) Her fortitude and gentleness, her delicate conscience in her secret

(1) Firkins: Jane Austen

love draws our sympathy. How good a tonic to have such faithful heroines! It refreshes and revives one's faith. She is not only faithful herself, but she is so made that others cannot but be faithful to her. The first evidence that Captain Wentworth returns her love comes during the long walk to Winthrop-he cannot see her suffer. Speaking of Benwick, but really meaning himself, Captain Wentworth says, "a man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart to such a woman! He ought not, he does not." We find Anne talking with Captain Harville, of faithfulness of men and women in love!

"'I should deserve utter contempt if I dared to suppose that true attachment and constancy were known only by woman. No, I believe you capable of everything great and good in your married lives. I believe you equal to every important exertion, and to every domestic forbearance, so long as, if I may be allowed the expression, so long as you have an object. I mean, while the woman you love lives, and lives for you. All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone.'" And Captain Wentworth hard by hears her and is inspired to write that turbulent letter of his undeviating love and constancy for over eight years. Are we to read into this the imprint of Jane Austen's equally faithful Irish lover, Tom Leroy?

Catherine Morland is as unlike Anne as conceivable. She is a young romantic, lively girl. Her character lacks the depth of Anne's - she is a simple minded, engaging, artless creature.

love over our opinions. Not good a thing to have some feelings
begins. Intelligence and survives man's faith. This is not
only faithful here, but has to make sure other culture but
to faithful to her. The finding lesson that certain feelings
reason her love comes with the long walk to Jerusalem another
see, or suffer. Speaking of beauty, the reality begins to
change neither it here. In man does in the not also the
vision of the lord's to reach a woman. No magic here, he does not
go time some feelings with certain marriage, or relationship of man
and woman in love.

"A human desire what contempt is a word to murder
that this relationship and contempt were known only by women.
I believe you speaks of everything great but your trying degree
life. I believe you equal to every important emotion, not to
every come to tomorrow, so long as, if I may be allowed the
expression, as long as you have no object. I see, with the
woman you love lives, and live for you. Just the relation I
claim for my mother (it is not a very unusual expression) and
serve all to that of lovers together, when existence seems
to grow." Lord Byron's feeling is truth and by nature belong to be-
gained to which that the student lecture or the unfailing love and
contempt for over eighty years. Are we to read into this
letter of some moderate equally faithful lover, the lovers
feeling this relationship is as unlike mine as conceivable. The
in a young romantic, truly girl. For her after love is a sacri
of duels - she is a simple lunacy, dangerous, fellow everyone.

We have a minute description of Catherine's sallow skin and awkward movements changing into prettiness and grace.

Catherine is the simplest of Miss Austen's heroines. Her very inmost thoughts are read by the observant person. We find Henry Tilney doing so again and again - in their first meeting at the Pump in Bath; later he guesses the romantic, fantastic story she has woven about his father and mother. Again and again Miss Austen speaks of a love that springs from gratitude - from the gratitude of being loved. In Henry Tilney we have the personification of grateful love, and as time goes on he finds himself really in love with Catherine.

In Sense and Sensibility the two sisters seem almost to share the honor of heroine-ship (if I may coin the word), but at times Elinor seems to overshadow her sister. Marianne stands for sensibility and Elinor for sense. Convention and reserve tell us that Marianne's excess of uncontrolled emotion is far from pleasing; and although propriety tells us that Elinor's conduct is admirable, we can't help feeling that she is a little bit of a prig. She wins our admiration and respect, but we feel little of the love that goes out to the other heroines. Marianne is her foil. "To wish was to hope, to hope was to expect" (in Marianne and her mother for lovers for Marianne and Elinor). When Marianne imprudently lets herself fall in love with Sir Willoughby - against Elinor's advice, she has no scruples in announcing it to the world at large by her attitude, even though there was no settlement of an engagement between the two. And

when Willoughby announces his marriage to the heiress, Miss Grey, great is the lamentation of Marianne. She becomes ill, she becomes senseless, all from grief for her lost lover. Elinor on the other hand, on finding herself in the same predicament is as much her own counsellor as she was her mother's and Marianne's. Of her reaction to a lost lover, outwardly nothing is visible. But she, being prudent and capable and enduring gets her reward in the restitution of her lover.

But of all Miss Austen's heroines Elizabeth Bennet is the most engaging. "It was a long time before a natural girl appeared in fiction. Richardson's heroines are like the faultless women in the romances, those of Fielding and Smollet are graced with all the charms of person, but their intellectual and moral life is left to the reader's imagination; and Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe never even attempted the painting of character. It was left for women to explain the emotions of women.....Miss Burney described the girl in society, but she was incapable of understanding her intellectual delicacy.... It is in Emma and Elizabeth Bennet that Miss Austen's genius is most distinctly shown. High-spirited, clever, frank, and true-hearted, they are very different from the susceptible maidens of Mrs. Radcliffe. But a heroine with a temper and judgment that we detest in our friends had not yet become attractive." (1) "So pert, so worldly a heroine", Elizabeth Bennet was considered by Miss Mitford and others as a work of poor taste. (2) Yet it is in that very spiritidness, that power of lively repartee and true-heartedness that we feel Elizabeth's

(1) Geo. Pellew: Jane Austen's Novels (2) ibid

when Elizabeth announces her marriage to the Saint-Germain, Lady Grey, proud in the knowledge of Elizabeth's "Bourbon blood", the Duchess Anne exclaims: "All from grief for her dear lover. Pitiful on the other hand, an finding herself in the same predicament in spite her the consequence on the one her mother's and Bertrand's, of her resolving to a lone form, authentically attitude to visible, but also, being prudent and versatile and sympathy with her toward in the existence of her love.

But of all Dion characters Barbara Elizabeth Bennet is the most engaging. "It was a time like before a natural girl presence in fighting. Dionysian's heroine are like the Dwelling women in the presence, Dance of Elizabeth and Scallot are present with all the charms of youth, but their intellectual and moral life is left to the romantic imagination and wishes and hope. Delicate never even attempted the painting of character. In one part she seems to explain the emotions of women.....Miss Bennet describes the girl in novelty, but also the impossible of understanding her intellectual delicacy.... It is in Dion and Elizabeth Bennet that Miss Bennet's genius is most distinctly shown. Vigorous, clever, frank, and tri-hearted, they are very different from the successible mediocre of live, modesties. But a terrible mixture and judgment that to detect in our friends had not yet be-come attractive." (1) "So not, so modify a moment, Elizabeth Bennet was considered by Miss Mitford and others as a sort of poor terms. It seems to be in that very spiritedness, that power of lively conversation and tuns-heartedness that so real attractive

(1) Dion, Tellier: Dans Autrefois Dernis (2) Idem

attraction. Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra (who was always interested in the development of her sister's novels) a memorable line about Elizabeth Bennet, "I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print." And it is not very difficult to agree with her. We are first interested in Elizabeth when we discover that she is her father's favorite daughter among five. She is a beautiful, clever, humorous girl. Her presence is stimulating and enliving. Like Emma she belongs to the active class of heroines in Miss Austen's list.

Unlike most heroines, Elizabeth does not immediately feel "a certain sympathetic bond" between herself and Darcy. On the contrary, she very heartily disapproves of him. But underneath the current of hostility there seems to lurk a secret attraction between the two. After once rejecting Darcy's proposal and receiving decidedly uncomplementary remarks about her family to incense her the more, Elizabeth is indebted to him for the service he renders her sister Lydia. The memorable scene between Lady Catherine and Elizabeth (1) takes place and lo!, Darcy again offers marriage which Elizabeth accepts. Then true to herself she wants "Mr. Darcy to account for ever having fallen in love with her. 'How could you begin? I can comprehend your going on charmingly when once you had made a beginning; but what could have set you off in the first place?' 'I cannot fix on the hour or the spot, or the look which first laid the foundation..... I was in the middle

(1) Quoted partly above.

of it before I knew I had begun.' 'My beauty you had early withstood, and as to my manners - my behavior to you was at least always bordering on the uncivil, and I never spoke to you without rather wishing to give you pain than not. Now, be sincere; did you admire me for my impertinence?' 'For the liveliness of your mind, I did.'"

We love Elizabeth for her frankness, for the "liveliness of her mind" and the relief she gives us from the passive self-effacing heroine. In her strong convictions and courage she is Miss Austen's most modern heroine. Indeed she has far more in common than at variance with the healthy, independent twentieth centry young girl.

III

It is a big step indeed from Jane Austen's calmly contented, resigned heroines to the turbulent, revolting creations of the Bronte sisters. The passionate suffering and violence in their own home partly accounts for the unusualness of the conceptions, but still commentators and biographers are wondering whether there was some personal experience which enabled Charlotte and Emily (and in a milder degree Anne) to give us such ungovernable, intensely tragic heroines. A wildness permeates all their moods, though it is emphasized most strongly in Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights.

"Charlotte Bronte (and we might add her sister Emily) was the first to bring the "Femme incomprise", the misunderstood woman, the woman who has great thoughts in her soul, who is capable of great deeds and of great sympathies, but who, for one reason or another, meets with little but scorn and neglect from the world, and those who slavishly accept the judgments of the world." (1) Another calls Jane Eyre "the semi-lyrical records of moods, of hope and grief, and revolt and passion, and joy." It does seem as though the heroines in their lonely suffering have let forth a cry expressive of all the accumulated force and passion and energy and vain striving against fatewhich comes to our dazed ears. It is in some such lyric cry that Catherine pours forth her soul - identified herself with Heathcliff: "I love him... because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same: and Linton's is as different as moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the

(1) Prof. C. E. Vaughan: "Charlotte and Emily Brontee a Comparison and a Contrast" in Charlotte Bronte, a Centenary Memorial.

eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight but necessary. I am Heathcliff!" And in spite of it she marries Linton, driven I suppose, by some blind, unrelenting fate. But it is not always - it can't be always - that such emotion is expressed by the heroine. The mood, the feeling, however, is ever present. There is an unconquerable restlessness in the Bronte heroine, and so strong is that restlessness, that somehow it seems to go out and reach the reader. And yet, all the time the heroine is hunting, vainly hunting and aching for love and peace, sympathy and understadning. That is why Jane Eyre is consummately unhappy when she is with her Aunt Reid; and why she gets moments of relief and respite from the gnawing fire in her breast when Fairfax Rochester's presence supplies her with the attuned interchanges of spiritual sympathy in their confidences. Upon the fulfillment of this theme - love and understanding, confidence and sympathy - is dependent the happiness of all the Bronte works - Shirley, Villette, The Professor, and Jane Eyre. In a more intense degree this is true of Wurthering Heights; and even of Tenant of Wildfell Hall, and Agnes Grey. "Men and women never struggle so hard as when they are alone, without witness, counsellor or confidant; unencouraged, unadvised, unpitied. .....

"Miss Helstone was in this position ..... She took long walks in all weathers, long walks in solitary directions." So, too, Shirley's sufferings were intensified in her lone imaginings picturing herself a raving maniac from the effects of the bite of a mad dog.

The heroines are so sensitive that the weather, the very physical surroundings influence them. When at the Bretton's Lucy Snowe feels comfort and ease, at the Pensionnate, the small, the narrow beds excite a stiffled unnatural manner in her. She is exercising a restraint which is harrowing her mentally, emotionally, and physically. Although the Bronte heroines are strange, eccentric, violent creatures all, they are also changeable. Lucy Snowe reminds M. Paul "of a young she-wild creature, new caught, untamed viewing with a mixture of fire and fear." But Lucy herself confesses repeatedly to be a different personality at different times for different people. One considers her violent, rash, revolting, and impulsive; another considersher peaceful, meek, colorless; still another knows her to be alive, yet shy and reserved, while she confesses she falls under no one description completely. There is in the Bronte novels much of the tenderness of the Celtic nature as wellas its childlike superstition, with the depth and intensity of feeling. Mrs. Ward in the Centenary Memorial quotes a passage of Ernest Renan as an apt description of the Bronte genius. "never laugh at us Celts! We shall not build the Parthenon - marble is not our affair. But we know how to seize upon the heart and soul; we have the power of piercing which belongs only to us. We plunge our hands into the entrails of man and bring them out, like the witches in Macbeth full of secrets of the infinite. We have no turn for the practical life, for chaffering and bargaining. We are difficult to move. We die if you tear us from home. In the heart of our race there is a perpetual spring of madness. Fairyland is our domain, the fairyland that only pure lips and faithful hearts can enter!" Truly the heart and soul are pierced

as only can be in fairyland. It is a land of feeling, of passion. Wild, bleek, harrowing, mercilessly chattering, Jane Eyre and Fairfax Rochester's lives barely escaped being; and Cathy's and Heathcliff's were. There is a yearning of the soul so intense that the very life of the heroine is torn up.

What was the heroine whose lover years and years later could still be wrought so? "'May she wake in torment!' he cried with frightful vehemence, stamping his foot, and groaning in a sudden proxysm of ungovernable passion. 'Why she is a liar to the end! Where is she? Not there - not in heaven - not perished - but where? Oh! you said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray a prayer - I repeat it till my tongue stiffens - Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you - haunt me then! the murdered do haunt their murderers I believe. I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always - take any form - drive me mad! Only do not leave me in this terrible abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my very life! I cannot live without my soul!'

He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and lifting his eyes howled, not like a man but like a savage beast being goaded to death with knives and spears."

In this violence of spirit the Brontes delighted. Is it surprising when we recall their drear and violent home life, their unenlightening community of life? The heroine wanted a man who could love and would dominate her. The ideal lover of the Bronte

heroine is a master, in fact the attraction first comes because he is master. Jane Eyre is first attracted to Rochester because he was neither handsome nor polite - because he was cursing under his breath, because he was curt, because he ordered her about she felt drawn to him at that first meeting when he had fallen from his horse and neither knew the other. Shirley Keeldar refuses Sir Philip Nunnely because - "he is aimable, very excellent- truly estimable, but not my master; not in one part. I could not trust myself with his happiness; I could not undertake the keep of it for thousands; I will accept no hand that cannot hold me in check." And if they find the hand that can hold them in check the heroines fall in love - and have no scruples in showing it - even before the gentleman asserts himself. And in Shirley, Charlotte Bronte tells us, she made what she believed her sister Emily would have been had she been strong and wealthy. Shirley, and particularly Jane, are heroines whom we respect for their endurance and power of quiet suffering. They are complicated characters, capable of violent suffering and yet with an invincible determination can school themselves to look into the face of long years of suffering - years of drab, colorless, savorless, routine lives. This outward resignation comes only after a battle between inclination and duty. How poor Jane struggled after the interruption of her marriage! How much she wanted Rochester! And yet, she had a sense of right, and like the Austen heroines the Bronte heroines were innately good - if placed in more trying circumstances.

But the Bronte heroine boasted no beauty. What would Miss Burney have said - a heroine with neither wealth nor beauty, impossible! Convention endowed the heroine with beauty, so Charlotte told her sisters she would make a heroine that would be no beauty, she would be small, thin, poor, and yet she would be as great as any other heroine. Rochester classifies Jane, "Ah! by my word! there is something singular about you, you have the air of a little nonnette - quaint, quiet, grave and simple as you sit with your hands before you." (Let it be noticed that the inevitable needlework has given way to idleness.) Anne follows, and makes her Agnes Grey as quiet and simple a governess as Jane Eyre - no doubt both sisters were biographical to a large extent - remembering their own plainness and governess days. Shirley has perhaps a shade more of beauty, and Cathy a fierce compelling, gypsy-like beauty, but none of these were beautiful in the way that the conventional heroine was beautiful. Indeed, in no way do these heroines conform to conventionality. In professing social ideas and interest they are, if not exactly defying convention, storming it with new munitions. No heroine hitherto had been interested in such questions as mill reform and interventions and strikes and rioting, yet we find Shirley playing a very prominent part in the mill life in her home town. Shirley Keeldar is a very modern girl. She has an openness of mind, a frankness of expression hitherto not found in heroines. Who could conceive

Anne Elliot or Fanny Price telling a man - a much older man - what she thought of his pride and political stand? Yet Shirley does it! She frankly tells the elderly Mr. Yorke what she thinks of him. Even Emma and Elizabeth Bennet who are far more self-assertive than Anne and Fanny, who are more bantering intone, do not venture to attack an elder's political attitude. In fact, we find Emma more often receiving than giving reproof. Equally surprising is Jane Eyre's undertone of rumbling and grumbling against the rich, the wealthy and powerful, whereas wealth and rank is something very much respected in and by all of Miss Austen's characters. Jane is not entirely complimentary to the wealthy Miss Ingram and other guests who come to visit at Thornley Hall. Her manner, her attitude show all too plainly that she is unwilling to accept this superiority simply because they are more wealthy and move in higher social circles.

What indeed could ever have induced little Anne Elliot to tell Captain Wentworth that her love for him was still to be had for the asking? But Jane? She returns from an absence and meets Rochester on the house grounds. He speaks: "'.....Tell me now, fairy as you are, can't you give me a charm, or a philter, or something of that sort to make me a handsome man?'

'It would be past the power of magic, sir:' and in thought I added, 'a loving eye is all the charm needed; to such you are handsome enough; or rather your sternness has a power beyond beauty!'" And when Rochester speaks it is - "'Pass Janet', making room for me to cross the stile; 'go up home and stay your weary little wander-

ing feet at a friend's threshold.'

"All I had now was to obey him in silence, no need for me to colloquize further. I got over the stile without a word and meant to leave him calmly. An impulse held me fast - a force turned me round. I said - or something in me said for me and in spite of me:

'Thank you, Mr. Rochester, for your great kindness. I am strangely glad to get back again to you; and wherever you are is my home - my only home.'"

Inspired with the same feeling of love Jane in her despair bursts forth regardless of appearances into the superb passage - "'Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? a machine without feeling? and you can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! I have as much soul as you - and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities nor even of mortal flesh - it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet equal, as we are!'"

And soon "'Jane, be still; don't struggle so, like a wild frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation.'

'Iam no bird;and no net ensnares me. I am a free human

being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you.'". And in those two speeches much of the Bronte heroine is summed up. It is characteristic of what they suffer in loving. But the attitude toward love is best expressed in Shirley. "'You are laconic; you would be stoical if you could. Is love in your eyes, a crime, Caroline?" "Love a crime! No, Shirley: love is a divine virtue.'" Those who debase love are only betraying their own coarse natures she tells us. It is "Charlotte Bronte's glory that she did glorify passion. Until she came passion between man and woman had meant animal passion," and "it was this thing cast down, defiled, dragged in the mud, and ignored because of its defilement that Charlotte Bronte took up and lifted up. She washed it clean; she bathed it in the dew of the morning; she baptized it in tears; she clothed it in light and flame; she showed it for the divine, the beautiful, the utterly pure and radiant thing it is, the very sublime faith, truth and devotion. She made it, this spirit of fire and air, incarnate of the body of a woman who had no sensual charm. Because of it little Jane became the parent of Caterina and Maggie Tulliver." (1)

The Bronte heroine received a little more formal education than the Austen heroine. She lives in a more advanced age, when education for women was gaining in popularity. Thirty years had passed between the publication of Miss Austen's last book and Miss Bronte's first, and in those thirty years education had advanced. We find the Bronte sisters entering Roe Head school successively. The great Reform Bill of 1832 came when Charlotte had been at school

(1) C. E. Vaughan: Charlotte Bronte: A Centenary Memorial

for one year, and great were the political discussions she had with her friend Mary Taylor. (1) Hence dates the political and social interest which is given so much room in Shirley. Jane tells Mr. Rochester upon his examination of her that she has come into his employ after eight years in a school - Lowood School; "a charitable concern" he comments. "'Have you read much?'" follows next. "'Only such books as came in my way! and they have not been numerous or very learned.'" And this may be applied to the Bronte girls. They read whatever they could lay their hands upon, all the books in their father's little library were known to them. Then came the years of schooling at Roe Head which is, in all likelihood, the prototype of the schools described. Then came the governess days which were by far the hardest, and least pleasant of their lives. To be torn away from their home was in itself enough - "we die if you tear us from home"; but the duties of the governess were distasteful to Charlotte Bronte for the mind craved to express itself. She speaks of this in a letter to Southey, who advised her against dreaming of literature: "In that capacity (as governess) I find enough to occupy my thoughts all day long, and my head and hands too, without having a moment's time for one dream of the imagination. In the evenings, I confess, I do think, but I never trouble any one else with my thoughts. I carefully avoid any appearance of preoccupation and eccentricity, which might lead those I live amongst to suspect the nature of my pursuits. Following my father's advice - who from my childhood

(1) Mary Taylor in letter to Mrs. Gaskell

has counselled me, just in the wise and friendly tone of your letter - I have endeavored not only attentively to observe all the duties a woman ought to fulfill, but to feel deeply interested in them. I don't always succeed, for sometimes when I'm teaching or sewing, I would rather be reading or writing; but I try to deny myself....." This experience, together with that of a governess in a private home supplied the material for the governess-heroines. The advertisement of Jane Eyre, too, may have been colored by personal experience:

"A young lady accustomed to tuition (had I not been a teacher two years?) is desirous of meeting with asituation in a private family where the children are under fourteen (I thought that as I was barely eighteen, it would not do to undertake the guidance of pupils nearer my own age). She is qualified to teach the usual branches of a good English education, together with French, drawing and music (In those days, reader, this now narrow catalogue of accomplishments would have been held tolerably comprehensive)."

The greatness of Jane Austen's heroines lies in the variations she can play on the theme of domestic ladies. The greatness of the Bronte heroines lies in the variations, the complications within each heroine. The evolution of the heroine has gone a step farther. Miss Burney gave us a stamp heroine - all goodness and social accomplishments; Miss Austen gave us the heroine of flesh and blood in the sphere of her domestic duties; but she has broken up the stamp into different kinds of heroines -

all lovable. The Misses Bronte give us the heroine of real struggle and feeling - heart and soul besides flesh and blood; and Charlotte Bronte has farther broken up each heroine into a composite of feelings, thoughts, inclinations. More than that the Bronte heroine can be a breadwinner without losing any of her self-respect or our respect. Truly the heroine is developing!

IV

George Eliot was brought up in surroundings that were commonplace and almost uneventful. Away from the rush and tear of the city, she was able to devote much of her time to study. Her study took the bent of philosophy and philosophic thought. Coupled with the philosophic readings was the influence of her uncle's wife - Elizabeth Evans, a preacher. These were strong factors in George Eliot's life. She formed and adhered to a strong moral philosophy, the great points of which were a life of strict morality, and of love and service to mankind. Hitherto our women novelists have been perfectly unconcerned about the condition of the world. Not so George Eliot; throughout her work this interest in mankind is uppermost. The ethical and moral purpose with which she unites her interests pervades her novels, and who more suited to embody this teaching than the hero or heroine? So, Maggie Tulliver, Romola, Esther Lyon, Dorothea Brooke are each in some way identified with moral growth, although they may not word it in just that way, or even beconscious of it. Maggie is continually struggling between her impulsive desires and the confining principles of right as set by the prosaic world of which, somehow, she is a part. Yet in the moment of supreme trial she was true to her noblest self. Romola is trying to reconcile a religious life and a human life, and in her too, the right living as dictated by her moral consciousness, not the blind following of any one man or doctrine, leads her to victory. Esther

Lyon is faced with her problem; shall it be the life of riches and the little luxuries that are life, or shall it be the life of drudgery ennobled by love and honesty and morality? Esther chooses the latter. And poor Dorothea is blindly ambitious, longing to give love, service, and if need be, herself, to some great person, to some worthy cause. This moral consciousness and integrity, this striving to uplift themselves and their surroundings is the keynote of the Eliot heroine. Before George Eliot no heroine struggles to be good. Fanny Burney's heroines are perfect, Jane Austen's are good or if a little below perfection, both we and they are contented to accept them at their worth. The Bronte heroine is the first to show any desire for strife and struggle, but that is in connection with a fight for love, a struggle of unusual people in unusual situations. George Eliot's heroines are struggling under ordinary circumstances. It is no easy matter for them to be good, they are like us, like our friends and neighbors with a grain of good and a grain of bad in them, but the good conquers the bad.

There is too, an intellectual emancipation of the heroine. She is no longer mentally the inferior of her brothers and men friends. Quite the contrary we are convinced of the heroine's mental superiority. Maggie has a mental alertness, a quick acquisitive faculty that her brother Tom will never acquire. She is far more devoted to books and study than he will ever be. Although younger than Tom, it was Maggie who was the story-teller in the family, and ambitious as Mr. Tulliver was that Tom compete

with the more learned lawyers and "raskills", it was of Maggie's learning and acquisitions that he was proud. We feel that with her, learning is a serious and delightful process. Of course she is first attracted to it that people might admire her -- for Maggie is a vain little one, but the real companionship for books does come later. Indeed, it is only Maggie who grieves for the loss of the books when the wares of the house have been auctioned off on account of Mr. Tulliver's love of law suits.

Little Effie delights Silas Marner and herself when she begins to read. It is a delight, a peak on Darien, when the printed page offers up its secrets to her which she may share with her foster-father. With her too, love of learning develops from the vain pleasure into a means, a useful tool, as the years go on.

Romola is not a modern young lady, but it is noteworthy again that George Eliot chose to depict a lady of culture and learning. With her blind father and Tito, she spends hours and days in the library - not as a learner primarily -- but as a helpmeet, as one almost equal in knowledge to her father. The books, the statues, the formulas in the musty library are friends to her, and she is superior in learning to many men.

Dorothea, too, is very learned and serious. We feel that she would be mildly contemptuous because we have not quite the dignity and advantages of superior study that she has. And of all her acquaintances only the bookish, dried Mr. Causaubon is capable of supplying her needs of superior education. Her reading has branched out into the most unknown and unexpected quarters.

"Everything I see in him, (Causaubon) corresponds to his pamphlet on Biblical Cosmology", she remarks, and we feel very small beside her strange mass of learning.

Esther Lyon surprises Felix Holt no less by the range of her reading and literary information (of a more human order than Dorothea's) than by the fine-lady air which Felix finds so hard to understand in the daughter of the dry little Independent Minister. And yet somehow, we know not how, this unlooked for learning in the heroine is not repulsive to us. We accept it in good faith, while Evelina's superior learning we could not accept. Perhaps it is because the very natures of the heroines are attuned to the education, perhaps they speak and act in conformity with their learning. Esther Lyon has had formal education in the past. She has been to school the required number of years and is an accomplished governess when we meet her. Beside her, Maggie is the only other Eliot heroine who has had any formal education.

One of the noticeable differences in the heroines of George Eliot is their pure speech. Those about them may use strong dialect, but the heroine is immune to its influence. Little Effie with no special, distinct care somehow avoids the dialect of Silas and his neighbors. Esther Lyon is a governess, and would not be expected to use dialect of course, but even little Maggie before her school days, surrounded by the illiterate parents and aunts and uncles does not fall into the half broken speech of her familiars.

The social position of George Eliot's heroines varies. Romola belongs to a class of intellectual standing exalted far

above all others. Dorothea Brooke lives with her uncle who is a member of the county gentry. She comes nearest the social standing of Miss Austen's young ladies. Furthermore, Dorothea is at the head of her uncle's house. Little Effie, on the other hand, is the foster daughter of a miser, a convicted man. She holds no place in "society". Maggie is the daughter of an illiterate, but comfortably situated mill owner, who is able to supply (with a little effort, and a few mortgages) all the needs and luxuries of a higher class. Esther Lyon is the alleged daughter of a little Independent Minister, who turns out to be an heiress of a large estate. All the ranks of a little country society supply George Eliot with heroines, but she too, like Jane Austen and the Bronte Sisters, avoids London life. It is society in the miniature that appeals to George Eliot.

A new element enters in the delineation of the heroine's character. We watch the heroine grow and even as a child she holds interest for us. We saw a little of Jane Eyre's childhood, but the emphasis was slight, and only enough to give us her early environment. With Maggie, the chief interest lies in the childhood. We see her grow intellectually, physically, and morally. We know her when she is nine years old, with hair so straight that in spite of her mother's hours of labor nothing can be made of it. We know her when not only her hair but she herself is undisciplined. And from the imaginative, impulsive little girl Maggie grows into an impassioned, self-disciplined young woman. Most touching is the affection and trust she has in her brother. Tom is the world

to her. In him is centered her sunshine and joy; if he smiles upon her, the whole world may frown, nothing matters; but if Tom is indifferent to her, or snubs her, which is by no means an unusual occurrance, then nothing, no one can brighten her world. There is one thing she wishes and that is that Tom may love her as fervently as she loves him, but it is not in Tom's nature, and all her early tragedy is centered there. We are shocked, amused, sympathetic by Maggie's little acts of rebellion. We understand just what in Maggie moves her to run up and cut off her hair at the repeated remarks of her Aunt Glegg at the unruly hair. We understand no less the immediate contrition when she sees her own face in the glass, and when Tom bursts into unthinking, nevertheless unkind, laughter. To poor,dear Maggie all the world seemed in league to subdue and suppress her when she did not want to be either subdued or suppressed. Only her father understood and sympathized with her. Tom left her for Cousin Lucy, so Maggie pushed gentle, whining Lucy into the cow-trodden mud. Naughty, of course, but just a child through and through. It was not her beloved Tom that was at fault, but Lucy who drew Tom's attention from her. When she is scolded by mother, aunts and uncles, off she runs to the gypsies whom she will educate and uplift and who will make her queen and reverence and honor her. These are true touches of child life. These are the grievances which a child aggravates into tragedies and they are such. This is the stuff which dreams, romances, are made of. "Maggie is the immortal child, wonderfully drawn, out of the very heart of nature itself.

Her joy in life, her doubts and fears, her conflicts with self, are delineated with a master's hand..... They justify the supposition that this is George Eliot's own childhood, so delicate and penetrating is the insight of the description - (1) "Maggie represents the restless spirit of the nineteenth century, intense dissatisfaction with self, and a profoundly human passion for something higher and diviner." (2) We are told George Eliot and her brother were the originals upon which Tom and Maggie are built. Maggie's "thoughts were generally the oddest mixture of clear-eyed acumen and blind dreams." "At one time you take pleasure in a sort of perverse self denial, and at another you have not resolution to resist a thing you know to be wrong", Tom tells his sister, it is an unusually clear,shrewd statement for Tom to make. But Maggie was all kindness. Her love for Philip was part hero-worship for his learning, and part pity for his pitiful deformity.

She has courage and strength, too, for when her father dies she goes out as a governess. She wants independence.

All that she is leads up to her love for Stephen Guest. Even though we may not like him for his own sake Maggie's love transforms him in our eyes as it does actually. He changes in the last few incidents from a carefree dandy into a man. There is suffering and pain mixed in this love of hers. She resists it with all the power that is in her, she will not let it come because of the blow it will mean to Philip and Lucy. She strives and struggles, she feels she has no right to find happiness in others' pain. All her early generosity, all her fighting power is upper most. "'No - not with my whole heart and soul, Stephen,' she said

(1) C. W. Cooke <u>George Eliot</u> p. 299 (2) Ibid p. 300.

.....

with timid resolution. 'I have never consented to it with my whole mind. There are memories and affections, and longings after perfect goodness, that have such a strong hold on me; they would never quit me for long; they would come back and be pain to me - repentance. I couldn't live in peace if I put the shadow of a wilful sin between myself and God'" and in the moment of her supreme struggle, the moment that is the test of all her previous training and the fibre of her being, she does not forget those who have been dear to her. She is good. And her goodness, because it comes not easily but with oh so much struggle, is more precious than Evelina's goodness. She chose to go back and endure shame rather than go on and merit shame. Maggie loved renunciation. As a child she learned it, that which was easy to have and which she loved to have, she gave up like Romola, for she believed that what she wanted so much was not good for her. So, with a simplicity difficult to convey, she renounces that love which has enveloped her whole soul. She is one of

> "The souls by nature pitched too high
> By suffering plunged too low."

We watch little Effie grow up too, and take much delight in her growth. But that delight comes because of the pleasure she gives to the much wronged and long-suffering Silas, her guardian. Effie gives a calmer, more peaceful pleasure because it is unmixed with pain. Those pleasures that are wrought with pain and suffering are far more intense than the pleasures that come easily. Maggie's was mixed; Effie's is unmixed, therefore

of less force and intensity. Effie is an innocent, childish little girl. She loves her father with unquestioning, pure love of a child. But when she is put to the trial, she too passes the test. When Mr. Cass arrives with his wife to announce that he is her real father, he has very little call to her affection -- there is no difficulty there. Silas Marner weighs far heavier in her love. The life of wealth and luxury does not lure Effie either, for she knows of its pleasure neither through experience, taste, nor reading. It is far easier for her to renounce the life of pleasure than it is for Esther Lyon. Effie is a gentle little creature, a simple little ray of sunshine in Silas Marner's life. Of herself she has little strength. Her love for Aaron too, is one of simplicity and purity. She never outgrows her childhood because of cares or struggles. She comes and goes like the flowers of spring. She is half fanciful, half ethereal.

Romola is a figure both near and far to us. She is near by virtue of the humanitarian principles, the modern philosophical conceptions, and far by virtue of her epoch, her environment, her interests and customs. Separated from her time, Romola is a sadder Dorothea, one who has been disillusioned, one who has seen and suffered. She is a woman of unusual culture and learning, yet singularly gullible. Like Dorothea, service is a big feature of her life. She serves her father in his learning, then she accepts Tito and serves him. Romola is a lofty, high-minded character, but she lacks the warmth of Maggie. A very modern religious crisis comes to her, and she solves it in a very modern way -- the larger God, the God of love, she will serve not a petty

party God of a single sect. She finds her opportunity of service once again. She finds herself in the midst of a plague-stricken land, and by serving these unfortunate people she serves also God. But Romola is cold, distant, we can never cry over her nor laugh with her as we do with Maggie. But she is a profounder philosopher than Maggie as far as expression goes. "It is only a poor sort of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures. We can only have the highest happiness; such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much painwith it that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good." That is her sad, sweet, wholesome view of life.

Is Dorothea a prig? Very nearly so. She lacks something of humanity in her self-forgetfulness, in her learning, and service of others. Her impulses, her thoughts are noble, but too often, too consistently so, she lacks a little of the mischief that Maggie strives to keep on the underside. Dorothea is a little too fond of her dignity, a little too serious for human nature's daily food. But she has a sincerity, a straightforwardness that are admirable. There are vague religious aspirations, unformed desires and plans for humanity that are weighty for one so young, yet not unexperienced by youth. Perhaps her misguided effort of service directed toward the elderly, prosaic, dry Mr. Causaubon while inspiring pity and scorn bring her closer to our sympathy and liking. Looking back

to Dorothea we find her a little too consistently on her pedestal, a little too exalted for daily companionship, yet she is one of the tonics, one of the experiences that do us good. She longs after a life of love and service, and when she meets Mr. Causaubon, she believes he is the answer to her prayers. He on the other hand is quite honestly looking for some one to look after him in his old age. He wants a little care and aympathy, somewhat as Philip Wakem did, only Philip was more sensitive, more truly loving himself. Then he ignores her, a petty jealousy of his cousin is aroused, and he steadily neglects and forgets Dorothea. Consciously it is under this treatment, but to her more definitely because of Mr. Causaubon's self-neglect that her soul, her emotions, are aroused, and she has a new birth. A vague feeling for the young cousin grows in her and she is humanized. But she believes in striving against and stifling all manner of evil great and small. She tells us that "by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and can not do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil -- widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower."

Esther Lyon too, starts with something of haughtiness, which like Dorothea's priggishness is soon to melt. Felix considers her with surprise on her first appearance, for she gives herself too many lady's airs -- and we see her through Felix's eyes. She is described as having tastes and graces that are a little too far above her station in life. She carries about her the faint suggestion of a garden. She has an "elastic walk", a "very delicate tread of small feet." She has an incomprehensible love, in one

who is daughter to an Independent Minister, of gloves, hose, attar or rose that wax "unbecoming in one of her station". She has that excellent thing in woman, a soft voice with a clear fluent utterance." She had besides, a mischievous gleam of defiance in her eye. But we are told her sauciness was always charming because it was without emphasis and because it was accompanied by graceful little turns of the head. She was a clever girl, educated in a girls' school, where she became instructor. When we meet her she is a tutor of French and music, accomplishments for which she is justly proud, and famous. But the charm of the Eliot heroine lies in the progress, in the development of her character. We see her grow, and, like all things that grow under our eyes , our love for her grows. Like Maggie, she has her vanity, she "feels a glow of delight at being looked at." We find her discontented with her surroundings, she is proud and conceited. She has a lively intellect. Felk ignores her, and she finds it irritating to her woman's love of conquest that he is not interested in her. She is vexed with his superiority. She and Felix have disagreements, then Felix becomes interested in her ethical welfare -- much as Mr. Knightley is interested in Emma's welfare, and he comes to scold her, arousing her latent love for her father. From feeling that she could never like one who is so much a pedagogue and master, she becomes interested in his social and political interests, she shows her willingness to share her fate with him. Then she feels that if she might marry Felix Holt, she might be a good woman, but she feels not trust that she can ever be good without him. So men andwomen are complements in George Eliot, they need each other to be perfectly happy. Yet

Felix will renounce her for his cause. But when he goes to prison, their love can no longer be ignored. Then unexpectedly comes the fortune which ages ago it seems, Esther considered essential to her happiness. Now, however, she has grown beyond material pleasures, she sees that wealth and station cannot supply all her finer nature needs, and she gives up her heritage to share Felix's approbation, to become perhaps a poor man's wife sharing his cares and poverty. Esther Lyon has grown from a romantic girl with dreams of Byronic lovers into the lover of Felix Holt, the Radical.

V

I choose Edith Wharton from the modern women novelists without any prejudice or design. Only she has seemed to enjoy a greater popularity than any other woman in her line of work.

Hitherto the innate goodness of the heroine has been an undisputed right. But under the patronage of Edith Wharton, who has come under the influence of the realistic movements, this moral integrity, this sturdiness which has so far been unquestioned comes very near the borderline, and once or twice falls over. It is not my purpose to criticize the tendency the nature of the heroine is taking, but merely to trace it. Havine duly said so, I may proceed like all others, to point out the sphere of the heroine. I shall have pleaded the moulding influence of the novel, the example it supplies to scores of youthful and not so youthful readers, but I shall be charged with didacticism, which, so many critics claim, has no place in true novels.

Like George Eliot, only more so, Mrs. Wharton is interested in a precisely conducted analysis of a psychological trend of the acts of her characters. Thus we find ourselves watching the inner workings of the minds of the heroines, helplessly hoping that they will obey the mite of goodness in them rather than the baser, coldly calculating sides of their natures.

All her heroines with the exception (1) of Charity Royall are members of a cultured class, eager always to criticize, pass judgment, and ostracize the victim when any misbehavior is detected. This is a singularly cynical, depressing view of society - all that you may do is judged not from the motives or results, but the appearances. Within that class certain things are not tolerated,

(1) I speak only of the novels with which I am familiar.

certain other things far more serious, far more mean, and base are tacitly allowed to pass without comment. Always in this class there is a brilliancy of speech, a sparkle of wit, a lively repartee, a deft handling of answers that guard one's inner thoughts. Behavior is everything. The characters may be moved and inspired by any motive, but it's point of honor to guard that motive from the keen eye of the other person and manoeuvre his interest gently to some less dangerous point.

Often the heroine is mismated or not mated at all, or has missed her true mate. This is the big interest of Edith Wharton. On this hinges the tale of many a lady. In The Fruit of the Tree the hero, rather than the heroine is the central figure. He marries a frivolous but wealthy social butterfly. She has no depth of thought or feeling. She is governed by impulses that have at the root nothing but trivial pleasures and pastimes. The two are utterly mismated, for he is of a serious turn of mind who on his marriage saw in her a wonderful aid in his social and factory reforms. She is not that aid. Then at a moment of nasty defiance she goes out riding at a great risk to herself. She falls and hurts her spine. The nurse who is unmistakably the heroine from now on, is confronted with a problem whether to chloroform the patient to save her from suffering, or not? She does. Later she marries the hero and that deed of hers comes up between them. Two or three problems are brought in, and the figures are made to serve the situations. The plot is rather loosely knit, the heroine changes in the middle, the whole thing is unsatisfactory. One feels that the heroine, as well as the other characters, is a tool

in the hands of fate - she is ironically cast about by circumstances.

Madame de Treymes, too, is a tool in the hands of fate, and yet she has the queer satisfaction of turning the key of another's destiny. She is the product of an ultra-civilized nation, a small, meager, dark woman whose beauty is in her gestures, her manner, her atmosphere. She is keenly critical, observes far more than she betrays - for her own benefit no doubt. "It was not through the groping speech which formed their apparent medium of communication that she imbibed her information. She found it in the air, she extracted it from Durham's look and manner, she caught it in the turn of her sister-in-law's defenceless eyes - ". Altogether she is an uncomfortable person to meet - she puts one on one's defence immediately. And yet she is vulnerable herself. She loves a prince, and to keep her secret from her husband, to aid her lover she is willing to be bribed, she will sell her influence. This woman with the pride for her name like Browning's Duke will stoop to break the impeccability of her "nine hundred years old name" to save yer lover from the law. But no, fatehas other things in store for her. She strikes her note, and the note of her civilization, her traditions. "'Is it because you have heard horrors of me? When are they not said of a woman who is married unhappily? Perhaps not in your fortunate country, where she may seek liberations without dishonor. But here - ! You who have seen the consequences of our disastrous marriages - you who may yet be the victim of our abominable system; have you no pity without the possibility of release?'" She is caught in the meshes of a trap inextricably, and fondly parades to herself and

to those about her her satisfaction, in petty interest, in social codes and forms. Clearly Madame de Treymes is no English heroine - there is not a drop of Anglo-Saxon blood in her.

In The Old Maid - a New York story of the fifties, the miserable creature who parades as a rigid old maid is the mother of the foundling whom her cousin has adopted. But she dares not love her child lest her secret be suspected. Under the stiff, angular exterior she covers a loving mother's heart, but she believes she has forfeited the right of mother love and filial devotion. As she watches the growing love between her cousin and her daughter her jealousy is aroused, for one by one all a mother's cares and loving duties are performed by the foster mother. The poor Old Maid is an object of pity, but of love, none.

In Charity Royall, Mrs. Wharton gives us a coarse-uncouth, illiterate girl. She, too, is an adopted daughter, but she has a harsh defiance for her adopted father and for fate. She is lonesome, and her lonesomeness is dwelt upon in such a way as to prepare us for any sudden mood or action. She has come down from "the Mountains", and the fact always humiliates her. She is the daughter of a drunken convict and an immoral woman "a half-human mother". Then there comes into her life an artist who is attracted by her harsh, defiant beauty. His attention is very welcome to her. She is satisfied with his attitude for the present, and dreams startling dreams for her future. Harvey, the artist, leaves the small town, and she learns that he is to have married one of

the fine ladies of the town. But Charity is proud - she writes to Harvey that she will not hold him to his pledge (which had come reluctantly only after the guardian's insulting taunts), expecting him to renew his pledge - but no, he is glad to escape. Charity is called to "the Mountain" to her mother's death bed, and resolves to stay with the mountain folk. Mr. Royall calls for her and offers marriage, knowing what she is. One has the feeling that Charity is not a heroine at all, but a moron. She is an institution-case, a menace to the public, our social workers would tell us. Clearly Mrs. Wharton plunges the heroine into the depths of respectability. She is the first to disregard the heritage of good heroines. Mrs. Wharton herself is entirely aloof from the heroines. She is disinterested in them and their fates - she is simply painting a likeness which may either please or displease.

Mrs. Wharton's other kind of heroine, though again at variance with the typical conventional heroine of English women novelists, shows at least a bit more of respect for moral values. Mrs. Wharton depicts a class that is materially buoyant. The figures which move across the stage are all wealthy people living leisurely on incomes from invisible sources. In this class one does not work. The ladies and gentlemen, the husbands and wives are together and separately endeavoring to please themselves, they are on the hunt for the fountain of youth. But it is a dangerous hunt. In this quest comes the beautiful Countess Olenska - beautiful? no - handsome, strikingly handsome. She comes into her family under a social ban, and she has so long been absent from New York that its rules and conventions are alien to her. Her cousin's

betrothed endeavor to set her aright- for the name of the family. In his attempts to cover the rules of the society, Archer falls in love with the Countess, and she with him. She wishes a divorce from her husband and is on the point of starting procedures but the persuasion of the man whom she loves prevents her. The Countess has a little of Maggie Tulliver's impetuosity, her rash, uncalculating nature, and a little of Maggie's goodness that is at strife with the much of badness. Like Maggie, she is on the brink of action, when suddenly she recalls herself. She leaves America, renounces Archer to his narrow, provincial wife who nevertheless has a greater claim. But thirty years later we find that her love for Archer has been strong enough to have determined her course of actions from beyond the visible plane. This is a little nearer the conception of the Anglo-Saxon heroine. She is more real, far more lovable. Her integrity which is tested by her suffering is worth the more to us. Her tears draw our sympathy and bring her closer to our love. In the background of Countess Olenska's renunciation Mrs. Wharton "treats the polite hair-splitters of the drawing-room with respect, but she shares Henry James's covert contempt for the pallid greyness of the characters".

Susy Lansing and Lily Bart - the heroines of the Glimpses of the Moon and The House of Mirth have much in common. They both belong to that society in which people have too much money and still more time on their hands. Into this circle have fallen these two people who have considerably less money and rather more taste for the offerings of that society. They manage to live, by much calculation and many services, in the pale of society, in its manner,

in its tastes and luxuries, but without spending money for the privilege.. They are parasites. Susy has succeeded very well heretofore. But now she has married a poor man like herself. And there are two to support on nothing. Susy has great faith in her "finding a way out" - and a way that supplies money, luxury, fashion and pleasure which are the four cornerstones of her existence. Often it is difficult, but Susy philosophized that "to get what they liked they had to do what they disliked." And that thing they disliked, or rather which her husband, disliked was to aid the lady friend who had offered the hospitality of her house to them. The aid consisted of helping deceive the unsuspecting husband of the woman who has lent them her house. When Nick finds out, he is disgusted at the cost of their luxuries. The marriage was an interesting one. There was an understanding underlying it that the union would last for two years, but after that if either met a more desirable mate, the marriage would be at an end. The two are fervently in love with one another, but the discovery that Susy "has managed" at the cost of being tools in the dishonorable affair shakes the marriage contract. Nick and Susy separate. But in her associations with Nick Susy has grown so that she can not find joy and solace in the old life of pleasure and luxury. Both come very near the marrying point again, but they love one another too well. Susy is both too proud and too unselfish if Nick loves another, to ask him to return to her. The misunderstanding is cleared up at the end. Susy has gone through the valley of the shadow of death during her separation from Nick; she has been

tried and tested; the dross has gone and only the pure gold is left. During the separation she has been governess to five children to earn her living, and the price of expensive things has dropped for her.

"'Come with me for at least two days - Susy!' he entreated her.

'Oh,' she cried, 'that's the very first time you've said my name!'

'Susy, Susy, then - my Susy - Susy! And you've only said mine once, you know."'

'Nick!' she sighed, at peace, as if the one syllable were a magic seed that flung out great branches to envelope her."

That is the reconciliation.

The tragedy of the heroine Lily Bart comes because she is "a little too weak, to do without money and what money buys, or to earn it for herself, and a little too good to sell herself. Lily Bart is one of the gayest and saddest of the spoiled. She is predestined to tragedy."

Lily Bart is the most lovable of Mrs. Wharton's heroines. She is near the end of her twenty-ninth year when we first meet her, and she is obviously on the hunt for a rich husband. In the meanwhile she will live on her friends' hospitality. She is not too good. Speaking of Gurtie, a social-worker, she says "she likes being good, while I like being happy." And that throughout is the tone of the heroine. She likes being happy. When she has been welcomed by her friends and the luxuries are fresh in her mind, she is aroused again in her, open, avowed shameless quest for a husband. And just when she is on the brink of success she realizes

that she will be marrying for money, and the taste sours in her mouth. She is continually two selves, each at war with the other. A true love for the youthful lawyer Selden grows in her (it is noteworthy that Mrs. Wharton's heroines, even Charity, love professional men and artists and authors). But the meaner self is aroused and forbids her acceptance of Selden because he is not wealthy and could not give her happiness as her class saw it. And ever and always her being craved happiness. The struggle is truly pathetic in Lily Bart, there is little resistance left in her but the struggle continues and continues.

She is a very clever woman. Her range of interests is unlimited- her interest spreads from law to old special book collections. Always she is alert for some fresh information that may be of use to her, and her mind is surprisingly acquisitive. Often she must resort to some flimsy bit, to extricate her from a dangerous "situation where a quick sword-play of wit was needful to cover her retreat."

She is a surprisingly modern woman. We catch her in frank modern discussions of marriage. She has an utter disregard for conventionalities, and these often prove pitfalls in her way to success. She is falsely accused because of this unconventionality, and returns broken in reputation and in spirit. The dauntless, fighting Lily Bart makes a pathetic figure in her attempts at bread-winning. But because of her struggles and her temptations, because of her love and her goodness we love her. There was a way of revenge on the woman who spoiled Lily's reputation that her own might be saved. Lily had the evidence. It would also give her a means of livelihood, but she did not wish to hurt the man whom she had loved. At the very end we find her paying her debts and remembering Selden. Lily is too sad and too gay - she endsa pathetic figure.

Conclusion

In Miss Burney's hands the heroine was transformed from the dreamy shadow of Richardson into an actuality. She gave it a more rounded life. The heroine's time is taken up by more pastimes than mere letter-writing. She takes the heroine by hand, an innocent, virtuous, young girl of seventeen or eighteen summers - and leads her, unsuspecting, into society at its height of engagements. It is Miss Burney's method to cast a halo about her chosen one, and we see her in all her perfections. "She is a model for the ages", but like all models she is distant and inconceivably by virtue of her superiority. We never see her in a dubious hesitating mood - she is all decision. She is all force in her gentleness. But Miss Burney became too engrossed in the perfections and forgot to make a friendly being. She cannot endure to depart from the main elements, and as a result we have a repetition, a stamp heroine. She give us a stamp heroine, nevertheless a good one.

Miss Austen is the next woman of great importance interested in novel writing. And fortunately she accepts this heroine of essential goodness, and plays a variation upon it. She gives us Emma Woodhouse and Elizabeth Bennet, Fanny Price, and Anne Elliot - in no wise duplicate, but all of them including Catherine Moreland, are fundamentally good and lovable. Not one is selfish, jealous, immoral. Miss Austen has succeeded in keeping the heroine of the English novels a good woman, without being warped in her creations, by that goodness. She has the larger vision; she sees that two people can be lovable, but their value may lie in different spheres. She can emphasize the constancy of Anne Elliot, the generosity of Emma Woodhouse, the trust of Catherine Moreland, or the good sense of Elinor Dashwood. Thus the substance - the heroine - has been broken up into its constituent parts, without the implication of

inferiority to any one part. One thing more Miss Austen has succeed in doing. She has given flesh and blood to her heroines, and proved that heroines may exist even under cover of the ordinary run of domestic duties.

If Miss Austen gave flesh and blood, if she gave variety to the heroines, Miss Bronte gave her heart and soul. The heroine no longer lives and breathes, she suffers and rejoices. This the Brontes succeeded in conveying by dwelling lovingly and forcibly on the feelings and thoughts of the heroines. They endowed the heroine with those passions and sentiments which they themselves could feel. They gave the heroine little physical beauty, and often let her win her bread. But in spite of the lack of wealth and social distinction and beauty we love and suffer with the Bronte heroine.

From the skeleton the heroine developed into a living creature, and from an organic creature into a feeling animal, and now the living, breathing, feeling person develops further under the guardianship of George Eliot into a rational being. George Eliot gives her heroine a mind and an intellect, the powers to discriminate between good and evil. She permits the inclinations and the judgment to be at variance. She gives her heroines an interest in politics, religion, social reform, in addition to the living and feeling qualities, and the result is a modern girl struggling and striving ever toward goodness and utility.

With Mrs. Wharton comes a snap in the evolution of the heroine. Several times she departs from the fundamentally good heroine, and in Charity Royall she departs from a thinking heroine, degrades into a living organism merely. But Ellen Olenska and Lily Bart are evidence that Mrs. Wharton can give us a heroine that is at least conflicting with the evil forces within her. In these the saving grace comes in the form of pure, unselfish renouncing love.

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